3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

done to Lim Hue-lieng or he himself would be guilty of with later grandchildren, but enough to soften his commands and make allowances for A-bok's occasional lapses. A-bok learned everything his grandfather knew about farming and was encouraged by him to develop that talent for innovation which has played such a major role in the family's history. As Lim Han-ci had been among the first farmers to switch to wet rice farming when the irrigation system was built by the Japanese, so A-bok was among the first to devote large tracts of land to the now profitable truck farming.

According to the village gossips, A-bok was not devoted to a life of hard work until after his marriage, but since this notion is traditional, particularly among females with unmarried near-adult sons, I take it lightly. The fact that he submitted to an arranged marriage without even meeting the girl who was to be his bride was taken by many villagers as evidence that he lacked the spirit and independence of his father and grandfather. Indeed, if he had insisted on choosing his own wife, he would probably have been allowed to. But even today in Taiwan, opportunities for young people to meet and become acquainted are few, particularly if they are not employed outside their homes. The kind of young women that Lim A-bok met through his *lo mua* recreations were not women he would wish to raise his children or care for his mother in her old age. His notoriously independent father had compromised also, and when he made a second choice of his own, it was not from amongst the accomplished women he knew in the outside world but a quiet village girl. A-bok married the girl selected by his mother and the go-between, and with the birth of his first child, a boy, he settled easily into the pattern of his grandfather's life and gave up the pleasures of his father's.

All of the farmers in Peihotien put in long, hard hours and hire help only when essential. Lim A-bok works harder than any and hires help less often than most. Some say that he wouldn't have to work so hard if he took a few short cuts, but A-bok wants his fields to stand out from the others by being freer from weeds and with neater windbreaks. In general, he succeeds, but certainly at great cost to himself. I have often seen him nodding over his evening meal, but if it is still light after dinner he goes back to the fields. When the hours of daylight are fewer, he spends his evenings repairing equipment and making rope. Because of his industry and his reluctance to discuss the family's affairs, he is a difficult person to interview. His mother is

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

#159 #596 decisions affecting his adult children is assumed. Lim Chieng-cua, however, is not the father. He is only the eldest male of the family, and a second son at that. The widow of the eldest son—the son who under ordinary circumstances would be in Chieng-cua's position—is still alive and, moreover, now has a son who is contributing a full adult share to the family budget. Undoubtedly this ambiguity in the structure of the family influences the attitudes of Lim A-pou and her son, but Lim Chieng-cua differs from his father in more than position. Their ways of looking at life are quite different, and their expectations for their future, vastly different. Lim Han-ci expected little improvement in his economic circumstances and received much, but this did not change his daily behavior nor his future expectations. He still desired for himself and his family the same things he desired when he was eating sweet potatoes because he couldn't afford rice. Lim Chieng-cua, like an American, expects a great deal more economic improvement and orders his life in terms of it, shedding those things of the past that he can, without losing the respect of his neighbors, and taking on those bits of the future that he can afford, without causing his neighbors to talk. To Lim A-pou who does not wish to walk any other path than that of her father, who thinks of prosperity in terms of more elaborate feasts, larger land holdings, and bigger contributions to the temple, Lim Chieng-cua's handling of the family purse is fraught with disaster. To Lim A-bok who respects and understands both views but is still too unsure to choose, Lim Chieng-cua's authority is frustrating and unfair.

During the second year of our stay with the Lims, an attempt was made to adjust at least their economic disagreements and to forestall what seemed at that time the imminent division of their extended family. It was agreed that Lim A-bok and his mother would take control of the income from the family land and that out of this income they would provide all of the family's food. Whatever was left was theirs to spend as they saw fit. The income from the factory remained under the control of Lim Chieng-cua and he was responsible for all of the family's other needs, such as major purchases for the house, its repair, gifts for weddings, funerals, and the other social obligations of the family. To a non-Chinese, this separation of incomes seems not only reasonable but in the natural order. To the Lims and their neighbors, it was unusual. In Peihotien, if a family loses confidence in its manager, they either divide the family or make do with a

• [176]

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

poor manager. Neither of these alternatives was agreeable to the Lims. They were too proud to divide, and the tension was too great for them to continue as they were. They chose instead to innovate, to compromise on an untraditional but still acceptable solution. Economically, the family now had two decision makers, but it remained one family, cooking joint meals on one stove.

For many months things were peaceful in the house of Lim. Lim A-pou no longer had reason to complain that Lim Chui-ieng was secretly buying special food for her own children. And, Lim A-pou was now free to reinstate the special sacrifices to the ancestors on their own death and birth days. Almost immediately after the compromise was reached, she also resumed the bi-monthly offerings of food and incense. For many village families these are the only days of the month when they taste meat, but the Lims can afford to eat meat without the excuse of a ceremony. Lim Chieng-cua had abolished the ceremony because he considered buying the required three kinds of meat on one day wasteful. To Lim A-pou, it was a necessity.

Even their neighbors noticed the new atmosphere amongst the Lims. Some of them noted it grudgingly, and some with real pleasure. But one woman, a woman who sincerely wished the best for the Lims because of her long friendship with the older generations of the family, told me, "A family is supposed to be like that, like they are now. The people in that family are all very good to outsiders, but they can't seem to get along with themselves. I'm glad that things have improved, but I fear that they are just getting along in the face and not in the heart."

Unfortunately, this woman's wisdom could not be denied. There soon was a quarrel between Lim A-pou and Lim Chui-ieng that revealed how thin the appearance of harmony really was. Again the relations between A-bok and his uncle seemed strained.

Why didn't the family simply separate and go their own ways? What possible good could outweigh the stress and dissatisfaction of their joint life? My husband and I have thought about this a great deal in the years since we left Taiwan and, as with any human predicament, have come up with no single answer. There is no formula for human behavior that takes the pride of the Lims into account. The very fact that most village families divide their household within a few years after their sons marry was a strong incentive for the Lim family not to do so. A-bok's concern about his fields, that he must keep other